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Subject: The Holy Spirit.

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A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them: and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."—Acts XIX. 6.

This is a history developing one of the higher ranges of truth, which is peculiar to the New Testament, and which is its most precious feature.

I often think that the New Testament is like a mansion built on high ground, in a region of magnificent scenery, whose windows open on every side upon views of transcendent interest. Although the mansion itself is comfortably furnished within, and pleasing, yet memorable is it chiefly for what one sees outside of it, and through its windows.

The New Testament is a book full of precepts of wisdom for this life; it is full of secular wisdom; it has in it promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come; the mansion is handsomely furnished within: but its chief merits, its peculiar characteristics, are the openings which it makes into the spiritual and invisible world. The windows of the New Testament are more important than the furniture that is within it.

It is precisely at this point, however, that modern rationalism and all that skepticism which flows from it attempt to do away with that which is the very glory of the whole—namely, its supersensuousness, and its revelation of spiritual divine truth. By *rationalism* I mean the spirit of the intellect, inspired by the material world and human society, and by nothing else. The highest range of the intellect, is this same intellect acting according to its own laws, but under the stimulus of the divine mind.

Modern scientific investigations, as far as they have gone, confine themselves to this world, as to a husk, or shell. We hold that the kernel of truth is its spiritual element. It is said, or thought, in regard to this, that if it has any existence, science has nothing to do with it. It is certain that science has had very little to do with it.

SUNDAY MORNING, Oct. 17, 1869.—LESSON: ACTS II, 1-40. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 162, 597, 755.

The human understanding excited through the senses by secular, mundane truth alone, is rationalistic. It becomes spiritualistic, and truly manly, by just so much as, beyond lower and material excitements, it acts under the influence of a higher divine stimulus.

These rationalists (I speak not of them contemptuously; but because there must be some term to designate them by, and as this is that which they have selected for themselves, I employ it) go into the New Testament, too frequently, as we might imagine a set of jolly, roistering colliers, just out of the murky mines, to go into the aforesaid mansion—a great house, comely, and well furnished, but principally remarkable for its elevation, and for the magnificence of the prospects on every side to be seen out of its windows. These jolly blades, just out of the dirt, are to have a good time. And, taking possession of the mansion, they first bring up everything they can find in the cellar; and then they empty everything that is good in the kitchen; and then they ransack the cupboards and closets for all manner of delicacies, and spread the royal board bounteously. There are pictures all around the room; but "These old coveys are of no account to us," they say. It is very much as some men speak of the old patriarchs and prophets of the Bible, whom they think to be certain monsters, half-way historic. They laugh them to scorn. And so our revelers, in this imagined mansion, set aside all the pictures on the wall, and all the books in the library. And of the windows they say, "Shut them down!" Through one is seen a long valley far down along the river course, with every line of grace and every tint of beauty; and they say, "Shut down that window! There is an ugly draft from it." Through the next window may be seen the sea, into which the river runs, wide, out-spread, and everlasting in its music. "Shut down that window, and curtain it!" say they; "we want none of that." And so the mountain window, and the champaign window, one after the other, are shut down. And now they can eat and drink and have a good time! What would you think of the refinement of such *gentlemen?*

Rationalists go into the New Testament, and here are miracles; and they say, "Shut down that window!" Here are the gifts that came by the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost; and they say, "Shut down that window!" Here are visions, and there are angels; and they say, "Shut down both those windows!" Here is the doctrine of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and they say, "Shut down that ridiculous window!" Here is the truth of immortality; and they say, "Put a curtain over it! shut it up! What we want is a rational Bible." And to eat, drink and be clothed withal—that is their idea of rationality. Every point in the Bible that enlarges the possible sphere of human life; every point in the New Testament that leads a man to have a broader

conception of duty, loftier aspiration, and a hold upon things which are beyond the sensuous sight; all those great truths that make God near, eminent and powerful—of these they say, "They are probably superstitions, and doubtful anyhow; shut down the window!" And so, when they have got through with the New Testament, it is like a jail, and they are like prisoners.

I like these brave rationalists! They are the men that say, "Oh! give us the precepts of the New Testament; but as to the machinery of religion," their thought is, "it may be all right, or it may not." They are precisely like a man who says, "Give me apples; but I hate apple-trees." As though he could get fruit without anything for it to grow on! They are like a man who says, "I believe in tallow, but not in the flame that is on the top of the candle." What is a candle worth that is not lit, and where no account is made of the flame? These men pretend to believe in the fruit of the New Testament—in its *precepts*, its *morality*, its *beautiful examples*, as they are called; but that very power, that very machinery, that very marrow, out of which all these things come, they officiously set aside.

I believe in them most thoroughly. I would not spend my life in interpreting the New Testament, and preaching from it, if I thought it was nothing but a book of common maxims and mere human secular morals.

Our text brings to view a memorable truth of transcendent value—one of the higher truths; namely, the existence of a universal divine Spirit, in its special relation to the human understanding and the human soul. We are too apt to discuss the question of eternity as a question of divinity; and we are always stumbling at that. We do not know enough to frame the logic of eternity. If we accept it at all, we must accept it purely and merely as a fact, and never as a philosophy. We have no means of framing a philosophy on a circuit so wide and vast as that. It is ten thousand times more important that we should understand the questions of the divine nature in their relations to us, in their relations to our intercourse with each other, and in their relations to our education in spiritual things, than in their relations to the future and universal moral government of God.

It is this that I shall attempt to speak of, in familiar language, this morning—the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit. It is this which is revealed in the passage which I have selected for my text. I will read the context:

"It came to pass while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts of Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

It brings to mind the case of the disciples and the apostles under

the command of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as recorded in the 24th of Luke.

"And behold, I sent the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.'

The disciples, at the death of Christ, had their natural reason; they had all the knowledge which had been reaped through three year's residence with Christ; but they needed something besides; they needed something to stir up, enlarge and empower their natural faculties; and they were told to wait for that something until it descended upon them in Jerusalem. What that waiting was for is to be seen clearly in the account which I have read this morning, of the scenes on the day of Pentecost. That day naturally has made its impression upon men through their senses. They have been accustomed to regard it with great interest on account of the results which it produced. But to me, the causes of those results are far more important matters of consideration.

It is the lapse of the divine spirit that gives character to the transactions of that day, and to the whole imperial history. For it seems that at a certain point, at a given step of preparation, not only was there the descent of the Holy Ghost, as an invisible influence, but it pleased God to accompany it with outward signs or insignia. Forked flames, which they likened to tongues of fire, seemed to sit down upon the head of every one of the apostles. And the moment that took place, they were filled with a new, unaccustomed and extraordinary power. They were endowed with the ability to speak in languages which they never before had spoken in. They were endowed with wisdom that they never had before. And all the knowledge they had seems to have been infused, and to have become crystalline in them; and they showed the evidences of a certain imparted omnipotence.

When this began to take place, the men who believed in only what they could see and handle, accounted for it by saying that the men were drunk. But Peter said, "No, it is only nine o'clock; and men do not get drunk as early as that." They had not the benefit of our modern inventions, or they might have got drunk a great deal earlier than that; but it took time to become intoxicated by drinking oriental wines. Men were not accustomed to get drunk at so early an hour in the day, Peter argued; and the argument was conclusive to them. They saw that these phenomena could not be accounted for on the ground of drunkenness. "This," says Peter, "is that which was prophesied. All your Old Testament Scriptures, in which you believe, have been declaring that the time should come when there should be a revelation of extraordinary divine power; that the time should come when the human mind should be inspired to rise up into a lati-

tude but little known before. Here and there a prophet has arisen heretofore; but by-and-by prophesying shall be general, and a part of the universal economy. On your sons and your handmaidens (for in the Jewish economy men and women always ranked alike. Of all oriental nations, they, almost alone, saw but little distinction between the sexes—and none when either the one or the other were called of God and endowed to do any work for the welfare of society, or mankind):—on your sons and handmaidens this Spirit shall descend. So says your prophet Joel." Peter quoted that; and then said, "This is the fulfillment of that declaration." It is the disclosure, in the new dispensation of Jesus Christ, of the divine influence universal—an inspiration that shall lift the whole human soul up into a higher range of thought, of life and of power.

I. The divine Being is not merely a person, superlative, infinite, who sits enshrined, and, as it were, hidden in the centre of his vast domain. We are taught that there is an effluence of spirit-power, and that the Holy Spirit pervades the universe. It is to the personality of God what the light and heat of the sun are to the sun itself. For, though the sun is in a definite sphere and position, and has its own globular mass, yet it is felt through myriads and myriads of leagues of space, and is therefore present by its effects and power. And though God is not present, and heaven is the place where he dwells, yet the divine influence pervades the universe. The mental power, the thought power, the spirit power, of the divine mind impletes the rational universe.

This divine and universal effluence is the peculiar element in which the soul of man was destined to live, and find its inspiration, and its true food. For although we find man first in this world, and he receives his first food here because he begins at a low point, yet as he develops, and goes up step by step, higher faculties, requiring a higher kind of stimulus or food, are developed, and he reaches manhood at that point in which he begins to act from the influences that are divine and spiritual, and that flow directly from God. Up to that point he lives as an animal, and beyond that point as a man.

This divine Spirit; or, if I may so say, the diffusive mind of God which pervades all the realms of intelligent beings, and which is the atmosphere that the soul is to breathe—the medium of its light, the stimulus of its life—acts in the first place as a general excitement. It develops the whole nature of a man by rousing it to life. We are familiar with the gradations of excitement.

We can gain some analogies from our ordinary experience. We are so made that our first experience of excitement comes from physical or material excitements. Food, drink, heat, cold, agents of vari

ous kinds, on being applied to the body, or taken within it, develop nervous excitement. This nervous excitement goes on past mere sensational excitement, and becomes an excitement of the brain—of its passions, its reason and its affections. It is the lowest form of excitement. We very soon become familiar with the fact that men may be excited by other than mere physical *stimuli*. When men come to live one with another, they are excited. They are stimulated by each others' presence. We may call it "mesmerism," or "magnetism," or whatever we choose; but one thing is certain, that men excite each other in a general way. We know that men are powerfully excited by the affections which they exercise, and by the evidences of reason, and by reasonings. In other words, while we begin life under the influence of mere physical stimulants, we soon rise to a point where excitements are social and moral. They are not physical stimulants applied to a physical body, but they are invisible moral influences which act as excitements, and wake up the mind and the affections.

But still higher than this, as men develop, they find that they come to a region where there are stimulants in the form of æsthetic ideas and moral sentiments. Here is where artists live. Here is where philosophers live. Here is where geniuses live. The excitement of these men's lives is not from what they eat and drink, except in a lower way; nor is it from social influences. They have risen so high that they have come under the stimulus of ideas and finer forms of beauty and sentiment.

By looking at this way in which excitements come in our actual experience, we are prepared beforehand for the teaching in the word of God, that above all sensuous excitements, and above all merely secular excitements, there is an imperial, insensuous and divine influence which is universally present, and eminently stimulating, and to which every human being may have access. It is soul-food. It is heart-life. It is the light and the life of the world. It is the doctrine of the Holy Ghost—namely, that as matter excites men, and men excite men, in the lower ranges, so man, lifted up far enough, meets God; and that the office of the divine nature is to pour round about men the natural stimulation and developing power which there is in the divine Being. As the sun rains light, so God's soul rains power quite independent of volition. There is a divine and special volitional influence, a divine and celestial ether, sent forth, in which men find themselves awake, and aroused, and prepared to develop, in ways of which I shall speak.

II. What is the result of this supernatural divine stimulus upon men's nature? It seems to act upon the sensuous and physical nature only indirectly, by acting upon the higher life. It is in general an awakening of the faculties. It fires men. It develops their latent

forces. We go all our life-long with iron in the soil under our feet, and do not know that it is hidden there; and we go all our life-long carrying gold in the mountains of our souls, without knowing that it is there. We carry in us ranges of power that we know very little of.

And the divine Spirit, in so far as it acts upon the human soul, or is permitted to awaken it, develops its latent forces. It carries forward a man's nature, opening in it, often, faculties which have been absolutely dormant. There are many men who have eyes that they never opened, and that are capable of seeing truths which they never have seen. They are therefore called *blind*. And they begin to see only when the divine Spirit acts upon their souls; because there are certain faculties which will not act except when they are brought under the divine influence. Then it is that those faculties begin life, as it were. There are whole ranges of faculties which have been developed only on the earth side. Men have a spiritual intuition; but that has never been developed.

It is, however, still beyond this that, looking at it in a purely psychological point of view, the divine Spirit seems to act on the human mind, by imparting to it fineness of susceptibility and moral sympathy, by which the soul is brought into immediate conscious and personal communion with God, and from which the most illustrious results of man's history are deduced.

Here, then, it seems to me, is the simple doctrine of the Holy Ghost, stated in brief—namely, that it is the influence of the divine mind, of the whole being of God, as it were, sent down into the realm of rational creatures, hovering above them as a stimulating atmosphere, and as food for the soul; and that when men rise into this atmosphere which is the nature of God diffused in the world, they come to a higher condition of faculties. They find faculties opened in them which they never before used. They receive in all their higher nature a fineness, an intuitional power, a moral perceptive force, which they never had before. They find, in short, that whereas their heart was like a tree in the far north, which, although it could blossom a little could never ripen its fruit, because the summer was so short, now their heart is like that same tree carried down toward the equator, where it brings its fruit to ripeness. The human soul ministered to by physical influences, gets up a certain way; ministered to by social influences it gets up another certain way; ministered to by the higher forms of human intelligence, it gets up still further; ministered to by philosophy and heroism it rises to a yet greater height; and higher than all of them, mightier than all of them, is the divine effluence.

Here comes the direct intercourse of man's heart with the great outlying, world-filling soul of God. And the moment the soul of man

comes under the real power of this divine nature, it is born again to itself. That is to say, all its powers have a new inspiration. As a man taking wine never knows how strong he is till he becomes almost drunk; as a man in battle has the power of ten men out of battle; so a man, when his soul comes under this divine influence, which the ancients used to call *intoxication*, receives such unexpected accessions of power, that he seems to himself to be equal to ten men. And there are phenomena connected with it of which I shall speak in the sequel.

There are several truths of great importance which will now seem more plain after this brief exposition.

1. The remarkable phenomena of the apostolic age, which have been reproduced in every age since, and which are now being developed here and there in abnormal and irregular ways in the lower sphere —namely, visions, second-sight, speaking with tongues, what is called "animal magnetism," various intuitional powers—are such as might be expected. We see society breaking out, every now and then, with developments of mentality which are unlike what are said to be "the ordinary sober, sound, scientific developments of mind." These things, in the forms of witchcraft, incantation, sorcery and possession, have appeared and reappeared in every age of the world; and there never was a time when they were so prevalent as in the time of our Master.

As you know, once in so many years, in the revolution of the stellar bodies, we come to a great meteoric year, in which it seems as though the heavens rained meteors night and day. And so in the revolution of moral elements, there seem to have come points of time in which there were devils rained down in showers, and men were possessed. Angels, also, seemed to be rained down from above. The whole air seemed full of sentient and super-sensuous intelligences, which were rained both from all directions.

Now, we read in the New Testament Paul's directions to men who had no gifts. [Some men had the gift of tongues; some the gift of miracles; some one thing, and some another. All sorts of gifts broke out under the preaching of the Gospel. And when the Apostles found a man that was without any such power, they said to him, "Why! what are you? A Christian, and cannot do anything? Have not you received the Holy Ghost?" In the case to which reference has already been made, the men said, "What is the Holy Ghost?" They seemed to think that it must be a garment to wear, or something to eat and drink. It was all that, only it was something for the soul to eat and drink and put on. And Paul said, "What were you baptised to, that you have not this gift?" And after they had expressed their ignorance of the Holy Ghost, he said, "Well, take Christ's baptism." And they took Christ's baptism; and that moment they flamed out.

Now what was it? They were illumined by the divine touch. Ah! that the laying on of hands since then could have been followed by such results! It has been like laying hands on a lump of lead, which remained lead when they were taken off. But when Paul laid his hands on men, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they that before could not speak, spoke in forty languages; and they that before could do nothing had the power of miracles in their hands.

Men say, "Oh! that belonged to the apostolic age;" but there have been sectaries in every succeeding period who seemed to have some such lower form of development. There is something of the kind in this age. Just now human society is full of it. It does not seem to me that these things are the gift of the Holy Spirit; but they do seem to show that there is a power of development in the human heart, in a given direction, by which it can do things far beyond what we have been accustomed to suppose.

It was in this direction that the early disciples were developed. They had powers which remained to them, but which for want of faith did not go on to others. I am not at all sure that miracles have ceased; though I think the object for which they were instituted has in a great measure, if not quite, passed away. I regard them merely as means of bringing convictions through the sense of wonder before men are strong enough to reason. They were therefore adapted to the childhood of the race. But under appropriate circumstances I know not why they may not be wrought yet. I see nothing in the human mind, and nothing in the economy of God in nature, and nothing in science, when science takes in the best part of the created universe, to prevent our believing that there are miracles to-day—to prevent our believing that men have visions, and see angels and infernal spirits. I see no reason why it belongs to the human mind to see these things by-and-by. I believe that the human understanding will be so vitalized by this in-dwelling Spirit of God, that its faculties will be so stimulated and spiritualized, that the range through which men will think and feel will be removed far beyond the mere bound of matter. But at present these various developments that are constantly breaking out show what it is in the power of the mind to do or to be. It does not show that they are inspired again.

In the early ages, when these developments took place under the stimulating influence of the divine Spirit, they took place, as I have already intimated, precisely as we should have expected. When a child begins to come out of its little animalhood into its true selfhood, what does it do? Does it come out suddenly, like an insect that was a chrysalis yesterday, and is a perfect butterfly to-day? No, children do not burst forth in that way. They come out rude, half-fashioned,

running along the line of development, tottling, prattling, making curious mistakes, glancing into manhood here, and stumbling back into animalhood there. And when the human mind was born it did the same thing. It ran along a line of development precisely analagous to that which I have just described. From the natural it flamed up into the supernatural, and came to its second childhood. And when in the apostolic age, it came under the more direct influence of the divine nature, it began to take a higher range, and a firmer hold of invisible things. It acted with just that irregularity which we should have expected, and which we see to day. I do not suppose it to be of God in any other sense than that in which everything is of God; but it shows on which side the soul is going to break out by and by, and take its flight. Its phenomena are abnormal—that is, unusual—that is, irregular—because there is no line of experience and no philosophy to guide them.

2. The experience of a soul which is lifted up into this atmosphere of the Holy Spirit, so as to be brought perfectly under the divine influence, interprets that figure of *marriage* which pervades the whole Bible. The rapture of true love in souls on earth at first finding themselves each other's; the glory and pride of finding one's self loved; the conscious swelling in us of another life mightier than we knew before being loved—this is the only experience that will at all shadow forth the communion of man's soul with God. It is the marriage of Spirit with Spirit.

Read, now, the 5th chapter of Ephesians, beginning at the 22d verse:

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

I hear these passages quoted a good deal to show that wives ought to be subject to their husbands. I never hear persons say that a man ought to be to his wife such an one as the Lord Jesus Christ was to his church—such an one that by the amplitude and grandeur of his goodness, by the richness and gentleness of his soul, he should pour over the object of obedience such a divine and blessed light that whether she would or would not she could not help looking up and rejoicing, and adoring. As Christ loved the church, and loves the church, so, husbands, love your wives. And the next time you want to read a passage of Scripture on the duties of wives to husbands, begin at that! Then the apostle goes on to say:

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth

it, even as the Lord the Church; for we are all members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother [going back now to the other side of it], and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

And then he stops, and says:

"This is a great mystery." What? Wedding? No; "I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

Here you see that underlying figure of marriage. And you will find, all through the prophets, and again in the teachings of the New Testament, that the marriage relation on earth is to be interpreted from the connection of God with the human soul. Then, on the other hand, the connection of God with the human soul is best to be interpreted and understood by selecting the very highest instances of blessings that come from the allianeing of two great natures on earth in wedlock, and transferring these symbols, infinitely enlarged and ennobled, to the nature of God himself.

You shall find, from the beginning to the end of the Bible, that this matter of the indwelling of God is treated as figure of speech. Human life is the fantasy, if there be one. The real thing is that divine life which is invisible. It is divine because it cannot be compassed within the bounds of matter and space so as to be seen. That must be a small thing in any universe which is able to wear an outward body, and to be limited by space and time. We live in the point of minimum; and all phenomena are minified in the flesh. When things become large, and high, and universal, and unconstrained by matter, they are invisible. When souls rise into the realms of the divine Spirit, they are associated with him. They are in actual communion with God, and God is in actual communion with them. So that to call men "Sons of God" is not a figure of speech.

We see, now, what is the full meaning of the terms, "Light," "Bread," and "Water," which are so bountifully employed by our Lord. We say that they are figures of speech, and that as bread supplies the body, so God's commerce supplies the soul. In one sense they *are* figures of speech; but the figure is the body. The superior truth is always illustrated by the inferior. And feeding the soul by staining it through with God's love, dropping gently upon it, as the darkest thunder clouds are stained through by roseate hues of light, and turned to glory; the coming down upon the soul of divine enthusiasms which throw their fiery sparks all through it, and kindle it with light and life and power; the coming of the influence of God's nature to the soul, brooding it, striking through it, and rousing it up — this is true soul-feeding. It is not like eating bread by taking it into the mouth.

When men come under the divine influence in this way, their life is said to be *hid*. Yes, it *is* hid: not simply eclipsed, as it is in sleep; but *hid*, by rising so much higher than the lower life, that the lower

life does not interpret it fairly. It has gone out of sight. Only in that sense is it hid.

The apostle Paul speaks of *living by faith.* "Christ liveth in me," he says in one place. In another place he speaks of his *life being hid with Christ in God.*

When one comes under the conscious influence of the divine Spirit, the soul lifts itself up with unwonted clearness, faith, joy, trust, effluence and liberty. What a bird was when it lay in its little round nest, an egg, compared with what it is when it sings in the dewy morning, near heaven's gate — that is the soul in the body compared with what it is in the joy of sweet and loving intercourse with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is a life which comes to some by flashes. It is a life which comes to some by blessed dreams. There is a kind of spiritual haze which seems to befall some men, as there is an Indian summer which befalls the year; but there is also a true life. It is possible for the human soul to live in abundance and freedom and blessedness, so that it shall be forever at rest and at peace. Does not it sing? Yes. Is it perfect? No, no. There is no perfection without full growth. Does it keep the law? It may, or it may not. I believe it does not keep the law perfectly. And yet, I believe that the grace of God is so abounding, I believe that the nature of divine love is such, that when once the whole of a man's life is directed upward toward the bosom of God, minor discords are not noted. I do not believe in the old stiff, ledger-like account of a man's conduct, so that just so many sins are set down against him, and just so many virtues are set down to his credit. I believe the soul's life with God is like the child's life with the mother. Do you suppose, when a child has a great, true-hearted mother, that she keeps an account of all its imperfections? Do not you know that she pours over the child such a flood of love that, though its life is not perfect, though its whole being is imperfect, yet through sympathy and kindness and forgiveness, she accepts it with complacency, as though it were perfect? And I believe the soul rises into such a communion with God that, though in its relations to time and space it may be subject to a thousand imperfections and discords, yet those imperfections and discords are overlooked and excused by God's great love.

When I walked one day on the top of Mount Washington (glorious day of memory! such another day I think I shall not experience till I stand on the battlements of the New Jerusalem) how I was discharged of all imperfection! The wide, far-spreading country which lay beneath me in beauteous light — how heavenly it looked! And I communed with God. I had sweet tokens that he loved me. My very being rose right up into his nature. I walked with him. And the cities far and near — New York, and all the cities and villages that

lay between it and me—with their thunder; the wranglings of human passions below me, were to me as if they were not. Standing, as I did, high above them, it seemed to me as though they did not exist. There were the attritions, and cruel grindings, and cries, and tears, and shocks of the human life below, but I was lifted up so high that they were nothing to me. The sounds died out, and I was lost with God. And the mountain top was never so populous to me as when I was absolutely alone.

So it is with the soul that goes up into the bosom of Christ. There is a reach where the arrows of envy cannot strike you. There is a reach where not even your sins can annoy you. Your soul may so rise into the bosom of God that your personal self shall seem annihilated. What you are, you are by the grace of God. You may receive such an influx of the life of God that you shall seem to yourself perfect.

3. From this doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon one's self, we see what is the reason of certain phenomena which occur in our special lives. There have been times when the least cares and the least troubles oppressed you beyond endurance; when everything went wrong with you. There have been times when your sun has gone below the horizon. And no sooner is the Sun of Righteousness below the horizon, than all mists, and distemperatures, and miasmas, and unwholesome things, seem to gather about the human soul. Those days on which you have been the most temptable, the most unhappy, the least hopeful and courageous, have been the days when by your circumstances you have sunk out of the sphere and light of the Holy Spirit. And then it was that you could not bear your burdens. Then it was that you were tempted either to break your sword, or, like Saul, to fall on it and slay yourself. Then it was that you said, "All my life past has been nothing, and all my life to come will be vanity."

But you have had other times. You have had times when it seemed to you that you could sing. There have been times when there were songs in your house in the night. There have been times when death had no terror to you, and when your feet seemed to walk on the mountaintops, and you scorned the low places of the earth. There have been times when, under the influence of the divine Spirit, your soul was stimulated, and you walked in the higher ranges of Christian experience. There are days when you have no cares and burdens. There are days when you have eminent beatific visions. There are days when you feel that your soul is going on to greater and greater liberty all the time. There is no man that is more shackled and burdened than a man who attempts to live a Christian life by the natural use of his reason just below the inflammation of the Holy Ghost;

just below the the stimulating power of the Spirit of God. There is no life that is more fruitful, more bountiful of blessings every day, than a Christian life by which we live so near to God that we are perpetualy shot through with the divine influence, lifted up step by step, and blessed in overmeasure.

It is in this point of view that the experiences which are portrayed in hymns cease to be mere fancy-pictures. They are a part of the realm of Christian experience which is scarcely recognised by natural philosophers. It is unknown in science, and cannot be known by it. You know, I know, hundreds that are here know, what the man of wisdom in this world ignores and scorns; for there is no other fact so certain as the fact of positive consciousness of experience. You cannot tell me that I have not had victories over fear and trouble. You cannot tell me that when my babe, that was dearer to me than my own life, lay trembling and gasping in the twilight of death, and I stood and was able to say, "Take it, Lord," I did not feel it. You cannot tell me that, strong as was my love for children, for my own children, I did not have some mysterious power given to me by which I gave them up and smiled when they died. I know that I did. You may say, "Oh, well, it was the fantasy of the mind." Yes, it was *fantasy*, if that is the language which you choose to apply to the higher phenomena of the mind when brought into the presence and under the stimulation of God. I believed in God, and I felt him. I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I almost saw him. I believed in immortality. As a bird sings, now in this tree in my garden, and then in that, so my child sang, now in my nursery, and then in God's. It was not dead. It had simply flown to the summer-land. And will any man tell me that these experiences were not real? What do I care for the distances of planets. A knowledge of them is well enough for the outside; but I tell you, the true life in this world is the life that is going on in the soul of man. No man knows what he is until he has risen beyond the height of literature and social pleasure. No man knows what the soul is capable of being or feeling, what vast circuits it can make, what voluminous experiences it can have, what strange triumphs belong to it, or what endurances and victories it can achieve, until he is brought under the influence of God. These things are to be experimentally learned. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit." No man can know them who has not experienced them.

But we, Christian brethren, have had touches of a knowledge of them. We have had days of knowing them. And why should we not have more than that?

We are told that the divine Spirit is not given by measure, a little

now and then. The divine Spirit is not like some *aurora borealis* which comes for a night or two, and then skips weeks and months, and then comes again. The divine Spirit is like *light*, like *bread*, like *water*. These are the symbols which Jesus Christ has been pleased to give us, not simply on account of their use, but also on account of their endlessness and enduringness.

But, may every one rise into this high communion, and dwell with God's Spirit? Every one. Not every one alike in fruition, but every one according to his own nature. If you are a giant, you must drink like a giant; and if you are a pigmy, you must drink like a pigmy. And if a giant and a pigmy go down to a spring, if the little man's cup is large enough for him, it is nothing to him that the giant's cup is ten times as large. The giant drinks according to his size; and the little man drinks according to his size. And men rise according to their nature into this blessed effluence of God. Some there are, doubtless, who have larger conceptions and vaster experiences than others; and so it will be if every man is developed according to his own nature; but you are not stinted because other men are more comprehensive in their experience than you are. It is according to that universal provision which was made for all men.

Now, all Christians who are living in these lower states, are living below citizenship. They are living below the life to which they are called. They are living below the distinctive characteristics of a Christian life. That which is to make you apparently and confidently a Christian is your daily experience. Do not go to your books to find out whether you are a Christian or not. Do not go to the syllabus to look up evidences and ascertain whether or not you are a Christian. I never in my life read in books to find out whether I loved my father or not. I never went to a journal to see whether I was happy at home or not. And I do not have much respect for persons who are in doubt whether they are Christians or not. At the beginning they need some help; everybody needs some help to be born; but certainly, men that have lived years and years as Christians ought not to give themselves much anxious thought as to whether they are Christians or not. One thing is very certain, that if your wife should say to you, "My dear, I am exceedingly perplexed, and have been for weeks and months, in trying to find out whether I love you or not," you would say very quickly, "Well, I know!" There is such a victoriousness, there is such a fire, in love, that no man is ever in much doubt about it. And in regard to this matter, I do not mean to say that there are not babes in the Christian life. I do not mean to say that there are not bond-servants of the Lord. I believe there are many of you that are the Lord's hired men, and that work on wages; I believe that many of you

are the Lord's stewards and agents; but how many of you are the Lord's children, living at home? How many of you can say the Lord's Prayer, and appropriate it to yourselves? You think you can: but you stumble, and lie in heaps, at the first word—"Our Father." There are but few men that ever say right out, spontaneously, "Our Father."

You are not living in the best parts of your nature. You are yet in the realm of care. I know it by the scowl and wrinkle on your face. I know it by your bent back. I know it by the melancholy tone of your voice. I know it by the minor key in which you make your confessions. I know it by the want of triumph which you exhibit.

Where are the blossoming men? Where are the clustering, full-hanging men? Where are those men who show that summer has broken out of heaven and is resting on their heads? They are the men who are "the light of the world." They are God's dear children, risen out of the lower atmosphere and above the storm. They have left the thunder and the cloud beneath their feet, and are standing on the mountain-top in blessed transfiguration with the Lord.

May God give us grace to find this higher life, this inward life, this blessing of God on our spirit, by which we shall be lifted above the lower range of experience, and brought up into the communion of sons of God, and made heirs of immortality.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Draw near to us, O thou Son of Righteousness, and by thy light and warmth drive away those clouds and mists which obscure thee, and hide us in darkness. Reveal to us what we are. Bring us into that blessed comprehension of thee which they have who are pure in heart, and which they may have who for the moment are lifted above life and all its various experiences by the power of the Holy Ghost. In thy life we shall see life. We rejoice that our whole life is of thee, and that our best life is hidden in thee, and that all this life merges toward thine, and that we ourselves are pilgrims going home, and that thou art waiting for us. Not content to make us joyful when we shall reach the gate of our Father's house, thou art sending down the road messenger after messenger; and we are met continually by these kind reminders of thy foresight, thy forecasting love, thy providence and thy grace, which throng our steps with mercies. And all our life long we are blessed; and we are yet to be blessed in supereminence when we shall be at home and with thee.

We thank thee for all the mercies which have made *home* so dear a word to us. We thank thee for all the experiences one with another by which the word *love* interprets thee to our souls so royally, and makes thee the Chief among ten thousand, and the One altogether lovely. We thank thee for all the instruction which we have had in the sanctuary, and the great outer sanctuary of thy providence.

And now we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that we may more and more grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We desire that our life shall be conformed to his; our heart to his; our whole image to his. We desire to rise from glory to glory by the power of God; to overcome things that assail us in this mortal life; to endure unto the end; and to be glorified with him in the kingdom of heaven.

Vouchsafe, we pray thee, to all thy people this morning that illumination of thy presence, that joyful blessing of thyself, which shall give them to themselves.

We pray, O God, that thou wilt sanctify to every one the various experiences of the past week. If there are any that have come down through battle with care and trouble all the way to this morning, wilt thou this morning speak to their adversaries, that there may be peace to their souls on this day of rest. If there are those who have come wet with tears, wilt thou comfort them with the assurance of thy sympathy. Greet them, this morning, with that light of thy countenance by which their very sorrows shall be made beautiful to them, so that to them weakness shall be strong, darkness full of stars, and death full of life.

Grant, we pray thee, that we may not desire to draw ourselves back from the experiences of good soldiers. May we remember our Master. May we remember how he became a perfect Captain through suffering, and how he learned obedience that he might be a Savior for us. And are we better than he? Shall he wear the crown of thorns, and we not touch with our hand even a nettle? Shall he be stoned even unto death, and we not be content unless we walk in all the royalty of life? Grant that we may be content to be followers of the Sufferer. May we be content to bear something of his cross—something of his experience? May we rejoice not only that we are permitted to be called by the name of Christ, but that to us it is given to suffer also for his name.

We pray that thou wilt carry light into every household, and comfort and encouragement into every darkened and despondent heart. Grant, if there be in thy presence those who are wrestling with their outward circumstances, and thy providential arrangements, that they may know how to cast their care on thee—to roll thy burden on the Lord—that they may be lightened. And if there are those who are wrestling with their own nature, and who find that their own disposition is the trouble of their life, and that their souls are as a troubled sea which cannot rest, we beseech of thee that thou, who didst walk upon the midnight sea, and bring upon thy affrighted disciples peace and victory, wilt now come upon every one whose trouble is with himself and whose passions are as waves that will not rest. And we pray that in thee there may be certainty of triumph. We beseech of thee that none may be despondent in turning away from evil

and seeking good, nor be unwilling to go up the steep and narrow way. And may all be willing, even if it be with blood, to atone for their own sins. May they remember Him who shed his blood for their salvation.

We beseech of thee, O Lord! that thou wilt bless those who look upon the New Jerusalem from afar, and are not of it, and seek not its gates, like travelers that, from afar, look upon some city, and enter it not, and pass by it. Bring near those that are afar off. Grant that in the hearts of many there may be a quickening and an arousing of the conscience more and more. May they that are of the world feel how little the world has to give them. May they understand that while it has little to give to any part, it has nothing to give to that which is divinest in them.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that there may be many turned away from wandering. May many be led back to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. We pray that we may hear of those that are Christianly reared educating themselves. As their parents consecrated them in their youth, may they ratify that consecration in their early manhood.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all those who are going forth from day to day to baptize in thy name. Pour thy Spirit upon them, that they may be able to walk boldly and firmly and victoriously in the midst of the allurements of this world. We pray that thy servants may everywhere rejoice to be called of thee, and feel thee in the very way about them, by day and by night, and walk with a song, and an assurance of victory. And we pray that thy kingdom may come among those that are outcast. Bless those in whose hearts thou hast breathed the inspiration of mercy. And as thy servants go from the sick to the sick, from the imprisoned to the imprisoned, and from the outcast to the lost grant that thy Spirit may go with them, and sanctify their endeavors. And as they water, so may they be watered.

O Lord, our God! we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless our Sabbath schools, and our Bible classes, and all those that are everywhere spread abroad in the week-day or sabbath, teaching the young. Ordain these instrumentalities for the benefit of the rising generation, and for thine own glory in them.

We pray that thou wilt bless all Churches of every name, and all that preach the Gospel. May their hearts be brought into such unison with thine that it shall be always and evermore a message from God, with the very spirit of heaven breathing in it.

We pray that thou wilt unite thy people with confidence. May the heart be mightier than the body. May the inward and spiritual union bring them together more than outward conditions can dissever them. And we pray that thy kingdom may come everywhere. May injustice cease. May wars come to an end, and the occasions of them pass away. We pray that superstition, and ignorance, and all things that offend, may be purged out of this world. And may the glorious predictions of the latter-day glory make haste, and unfold their banners, and show themselves mighty upon the mountains, and descend into the plains, for final victory.

And to thy name, Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word of truth spoken to all that have heard it. Come for thine own, dear Savior. Come for thy followers, disheveled as they are, wandering hither and thither, and oppressed. O Lord Jesus! what is the experience of thy gentle and pitying soul, to see thine own so despoiled? When our children are scattered in evil, how do we bear burdens! and dost not thou still bear burdens on our account? Are we not still healed by the chastisements which are laid upon thee, and not upon us. Oh, abiding Savior, reveal to thy servants the way of salvation. Bathe our hearts in the atmosphere of thy love. Send summer upon us all. Give us an open eye and a receptive heart. Give us elevation into that region where who shall find our true food, our true society, and our true life. And thus may we live in a glorious beatific vision. Thus may we live in increasing amplitude of experience. And dying, may we go from glory to glory.

And to thy name shall be the praise, forever and forever. *Amen.*

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